

EVIDENCE OF EDITORIAL CHANGE IN THE *WORTBERICHT* OF THE FOURTH DAY

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This paper discusses the textual variant **לְהַאִיר עַל הָאָרֶץ** found in the *Wortbericht* of the fourth day in both the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. Here it is proposed that this variant is best explained in connection with an editorial use of *Wiederaufnahme* (“resumptive repetition”) rather than as a result of harmonization.

THE *WORTBERICHT* OF THE FOURTH DAY

At the beginning of the 20th century two scholars, Stade and Schwally, independently proposed that the creation narrative in Gen 1:1–2:3 is actually composed of two distinct layers: one in which creation is effected through divine action and the other in which creation is effected through divine speech.¹ Since then these layers have come to be referred to as the *Tatbericht* (“deed report”) and the *Wortbericht* (“word report”).² While an assessment of the merits of this proposal need not detain us at this time, the terms *Wortbericht* and *Tatbericht* can helpfully serve as shorthand to refer to the evident command-execution movements within the presently constituted narrative of Genesis 1 and are so used here.

The *Wortbericht* of the fourth day, the subject of this paper, is found in Gen 1:14–15. According to the Masoretic Text (M), the recension of the text most familiar to readers, these verses read as follows:

MASORETIC TEXT (M)

**וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיָּם
וּבֵין הַלֵּילָה וְהַיּוֹם לְאֹתָת וּלְמוֹעֵד לַיָּמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: ¹⁵ וְהָיוּ לְמַאֲוֶרֶת
בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְיְהִי-כֵן:**

¹ Bernhard Stade, *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments I* (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr, 1905), 349; Friedrich Schwally, “Die biblischen Schöpfungsberichte,” *ARW* 9 (1906): 159–75.

² For a survey of subsequent developments on this proposal, see W. H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* (WMANT 17; Neukirchen–Vluy: Neukirchener, 1964), 14–20; Jürg Hutzli, *The Origins of P: Literary Profiles and Strata of the Priestly Texts in Genesis 1–Exodus 40* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023), 44–5.

¹⁴ Then *Elohim* said, “Let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to create a distinction between the day and the night, so that they may serve as signs, both for occasions and for days and years, ¹⁵ and may serve as luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth.” And so it occurred.

One should take note of the underlined phrase להאיר על הארץ “to illuminate the earth” which, according to M, appears once in the *Wortbericht*. This represents a variant relative to the other two main witnesses to the text, the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) and the Septuagint (G), which each have two occurrences of the phrase in the *Wortbericht*:³

SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH (SP)

14 ..מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · סִמְנֵי־אֱלֹהִים · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם 14
 · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם
 · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם
 ..מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · סִמְנֵי־אֱלֹהִים · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם · מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם 15
 :: מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם :: מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם :: מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם :: מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם ::

14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ
 וְלִהְיוֹת לְבֵינִים בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים
 וּשְׁנָיִם: 15 וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְיָהִי־
 כֵּן:

¹⁴ Then *Elohim* said, “Let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth and to create a distinction between the day and the night, so that they may serve as signs, both for occasions and for days and years, ¹⁵ and may serve as luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth.” And so it occurred.

SEPTUAGINT (G)

14 Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Γενηθήτωσαν φωστῆρες ἐν τῷ στερεώματι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ
 εἰς φαῦσιν τῆς γῆς τοῦ διαχωρίζειν ἀνὰ μέσον τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τῆς
 νυκτὸς καὶ ἔστωσαν εἰς σημεῖα καὶ εἰς καιροὺς καὶ εἰς ἡμέρας καὶ εἰς ἐνιαυτοὺς,
 15 καὶ ἔστωσαν εἰς φαῦσιν ἐν τῷ στερεώματι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὥστε φαίνειν ἐπὶ τῆς
 γῆς. καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως.

³ These sources are given here with their Tiberian Hebrew equivalents to make for easy comparison. Note that words with dashed underlining indicate additional variants which fall outside the main scope of the present paper.

14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ
 לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים
 וּלְשָׁנִים: 15 וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-
 כֵּן:

¹⁴ Then *Elohim* said, “Let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth, to create a distinction between the day and the night, so that they may be for signs and for occasions and for days and for years,⁴ ¹⁵ and may serve as luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth.” And so it occurred.

The exegete is thus faced with two questions: Which of these variants in the *Wortbericht* represents the earliest recoverable text? How does one account for the variation between these texts?

HARMONIZATION?

The prevailing view among textual critics is that the variant form of the *Wortbericht* seen in SP and G is the result of harmonization.⁵ Sharing this assessment, Hendel provides a detailed discussion of these variants which states in part,

The secondary nature of this plus may be discerned by consideration of the literary context. The relevant portions of vv 15 and 17 read **ברקיע השמים להאיר על הארץ**. For v 14, M reads **ברקיע השמים**, to which a harmonizing scribe would naturally add **להאיר על הארץ**. But this harmonization of details disturbs the literary progression in these verses. Verses 14–15 relate the *Wortbericht* of this act of creation, in which two functions of the lights, **להבדיל**, “to divide,” and **להאיר**, “to light,” are commanded in two separate clauses. (In contrast, in the

⁴ Concerning the textual variant **ולשנים** “and for years” evidenced in G (καὶ εἰς ἔνιαυτους), Hendel writes, “In the coordinated series of four nouns in the construction **ל . . . ויהיו**, ‘they shall be(come),’ M and S lack the preposition **ל** before the last noun in the series, **ולשנים**. Grammatically, one would expect the preposition before all four nouns, which one finds in G, Syr, and now 4QGen^k. The grammatically correct and now clearly attested reading is to be preferred” (Hendel, *Text of Genesis 1–11: Textual Studies and Critical Edition* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1998), 41–2). However, contrary to Hendel’s assessment, it is the reading of M and SP that is to be preferred: **ויהיו לאותות ולמועדים ולימים ושנים** “so that they may serve *as* signs, *both for* occasions *and for* days *and* years.” The second and third instances of the conjunction **ו** are used here with the meaning *both . . . and . . .* to specify what the signs are intended to indicate, while the fourth instance simply links the two periods of time together as a unit (cf. *HALOT* s.v. **ו** 9). Accordingly, the third instance of the preposition **ל** relates to the unit “days and years” and not simply to “days” alone (cf. T^o: **יומין ושנין**). A scribe in the tradition ancestral to 4QGen^k and the *Vorlagen* of G and S, not understanding these complex nuances, “corrected” the text by adding a fourth preposition **ל** to “years”: **ויהיו לאותות ולמועדים ולימים** “so that they may be *for* signs *and for* occasions *and for* days *and for* years.”

⁵ For example, see Emanuel Tov, “The Harmonizing Character of the Septuagint of Genesis 1–11,” in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, Septuagint: Collected Essays, Volume 3* (VTSup 167; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 475, 478.

Tatbericht in vv 16–18, these two functions, along with לְמַשֵּׁל, “to rule,” appear in a single clause.) The plus in G and S of v 14, mirroring the parallel phrase in vv 15 and 17, results in God uttering the phrase “to light up the earth” twice in the *Wortbericht* in identical language, thus needlessly repeating himself. The plus disturbs the discourse in the *Wortbericht* and fails to respect the literary variation between *Wortbericht* and *Tatbericht*. For these reasons, the longer reading is best viewed as a harmonization of details that ironically results in a disharmonious narrative.⁶

While Hendel provides an explanation of the variant found in SP and G, one cannot help but notice his stress on how this harmonization disturbs the flow of the *Wortbericht*. It is questionable that a scribe would introduce such an inelegant harmonization into the text simply for the sake of a concordance in wording. One may therefore legitimately ask whether something more might be at work to explain the apparent awkwardness in SP and G. Hendel himself provides a clue to an alternative solution when he accuses the would be harmonizer of “needlessly repeating himself.” This brings us to the subject of *Wiederaufnahme*, or resumptive repetition.

RESUMPTIVE REPETITION

Wiederaufnahme

As explained by Müller, Pakkala and ter Haar Romeny, “This editorial technique [of *Wiederaufnahme*] is often assumed in literary criticism and is also used as an argument for possible expansions. The reason for the repetition was the editor’s attempt to return to the older text after the expansion.”⁷ A good example to illustrate the use of this technique may be found in Lev 17:1–4. In M these verses read as follows:

MASORETIC TEXT (M)

1 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 2 דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו וְאֶל-
כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה תִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:
3 אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט שׂוֹר אוֹ-כֶשֶׂב אוֹ-עֵז בְּמִחְנֶה
אוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט מִחוּץ לַמִּחְנֶה: 4 וְאֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא הֵבִיאוּ
לְהִקְרִיב קָרְבָן לַיהוָה לִפְנֵי מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה דָּם יַחֲשֹׁב לְאִישׁ הַהוּא
דָּם שָׁפָךְ וְנִכְרַת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מִקֶּרֶב עַמּוֹ:

⁶ Hendel, *Genesis 1–11*, 29.

⁷ Reinhard Müller, Juha Pakkala and Bas ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Text in the Hebrew Bible* (SBLRBS 75; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 22.

[illegible]

¹ Then Y_{HWH} spoke to Moshe, saying, ² “Speak to Aharon and to his sons, and to all the sons of Yisra’el, so that you may say to them: ‘This is the word

which YHWH has commanded, saying, ³ “Any man of the house of Yisra’el who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat within the camp, or who slaughters outside the camp, ⁴ but has not brought it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to make it an ascensional offering or a communion offering to YHWH for YOUR acceptance as a soothing odor, and slaughtered it outside, but has not brought it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to present it as a present to YHWH, before the dwelling of YHWH, it shall be considered bloodshed to that man—he has shed blood, so that man shall be cut off from among his people.

SEPTUAGINT (G)

⁹ Καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν λέγων ² Λάλησον πρὸς Ααρων καὶ πρὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ πρὸς πάντας υἱοὺς Ισραηλ καὶ ἐρεῖς πρὸς αὐτούς Τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ ἐνετείλατο κύριος λέγων ³ Ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπος τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ ἢ τῶν προσηλύτων τῶν προσκειμένων ἐν ὑμῖν, ὃς ἂν σφάξῃ μόσχον ἢ πρόβατον ἢ αἶγα ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ καὶ ὃς ἂν σφάξῃ ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς ⁴ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου μὴ ἐνέγκῃ ὥστε ποιῆσαι αὐτὸ εἰς ὀλοκαύτωμα ἢ σωτήριον κυρίῳ δεκτὸν εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, καὶ ὃς ἂν σφάξῃ ἔξω καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου μὴ ἐνέγκῃ αὐτὸ ὥστε μὴ προσενέγκαι δῶρον κυρίῳ ἀπέναντι τῆς σκηνῆς κυρίου, καὶ λογισθῆσεται τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκεῖνῳ αἷμα· αἷμα ἐξέχεεν, ἐξολεθρευθῆσεται ἡ ψυχὴ ἐκείνη ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτῆς·

¹ וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר: ² דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בְּנָיו וְאֶל-כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ³ אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט שׁוֹר אֹי-כֶשֶׁב אֹי-עֶז בַּמִּחֲנֶה אוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה: ⁴ וְאֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא הֵבִיאוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתוֹ עֹלָה אוֹ שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצּוֹנְכֶם לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ וַיִּשְׁחָטְהוּ בַּחוּץ וְאֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא הֵבִיאוּ לְהַקְרִיב קָרְבָּן לַיהוָה לִפְנֵי מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה דָּם יִחַשֵׁב לְאִישׁ הֵהוּא דָם שָׁפַךְ וַנִּכְרַתָּה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִיא מִקָּרֵב עַמּוֹ:

¹ Then YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying, ² “Speak to Aharon and to his sons, and to all the sons of Yisra’el, so that you may say to them: ‘This is the word which YHWH has commanded, saying, ³ “Any man from the sons of Yisra’el, or the sojourner who sojourns in YOUR midst,⁸ who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat within the camp, or who slaughters outside the camp, ⁴ but has not brought it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to make it an ascensional offering or

⁸ A clearly related variant to this is known from 4QLev^d frg. 41. 2: וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בִּישְׂרָאֵל “or the sojourner who] sojourns in Yisra’el.”

a communion offering to YHWH for YOUR acceptance as a soothing odor, and slaughtered it outside, but has not brought it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to present a present to YHWH, before the dwelling of YHWH, it shall be considered bloodshed to that man—he has shed blood, so that soul shall be cut off⁹ from among his people.

In this example, SP and G evidences the use of *Wiederaufnahme* to place an expansion into the text while M preserves the earlier unedited reading. This expansion is indicated by grey highlighting in the citations above. The second occurrence of the underlined clause ואל פתח אהל מועד לא הביאו “but has not brought it to the entrance of the tent of meeting” can be seen to stand at the end of the expansion to close it out and return to the original text. One can observe how the use of *Wiederaufnahme* here has also introduced a certain awkwardness into the text. This is noted by Müller, Pakkala and ter Haar Romeny who write, “In Lev 17:4 the technique [of *Wiederaufnahme*] was applied rather mechanically and created a stylistically awkward passage, because such a large section was repeated and the expansion was relatively short. The repetition is too long in relation to the added material.”¹⁰

In light of these observations on the use of *Wiederaufnahme* in the above example, one can view the similar textual situation in the *Wortbericht* of the fourth day in a new light and propose the following alternative scenario to explain the textual data:

1. The earliest recoverable text is found in SP and G whose awkward repetition of the phrase להאיר על הארץ “to illuminate the earth” is easily attributable to the use of *Wiederaufnahme* to frame an expansion introduced into the text. This indicates that although these textual witnesses evidence the earliest *recoverable* text, they do not evidence the earliest *inferable* text which lacked the expansion.
2. M evidences a secondary text which seeks to mitigate the awkwardness created by the *Wiederaufnahme* seen in SP and G through an omission of the *first* instance of the phrase להאיר על הארץ “to illuminate the earth” while retaining the second instance along with the secondary expansion. While this makes for a smoother text, it obscures the secondary nature of the expansion since the evidence for the use of *Wiederaufnahme* is no longer evident.
3. The earliest form of the text is no longer extant in any of the textual witnesses, but is inferable from the *Wiederaufnahme* in SP and G. One need only omit the expansion together with its second instance of the phrase להאיר על הארץ “to illuminate the earth.” The resulting critical text together with the proposed scenario for the development of the text is laid out on the following page.

⁹ The variant הַנֶּפֶשׁ “soul” necessitates a change in the verb and pronoun when retroverted into Hebrew.

¹⁰ Müller, Pakkala and Romeny, *Evidence of Editing*, 22.

1. CRITICAL TEXT

Original Composition

¹⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ
וַיְהיֶי-כֵן:

¹⁴ Then *Elohim* said, “Let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth.” And so it occurred.



2. THE TEXT OF SP AND G-*VORLAGE*

Expanded Text

¹⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ
וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים
וּשְׁנָיִם: ¹⁵ וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהיֶי-
כֵן:

¹⁴ Then *Elohim* said, “Let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth and to create a distinction between the day and the night, so that they may serve as signs, both for occasions and for days and years, ¹⁵ and may serve as luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth.” And so it occurred.



3. THE TEXT OF M

Facilitated Text

¹⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין
הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: ¹⁵ וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת
בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהיֶי-כֵן:

¹⁴ Then *Elohim* said, “Let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to create a distinction between the day and the night, so that they may serve as signs, both for occasions and for days and years, ¹⁵ and may serve as luminaries in the congealment of the heavens to illuminate the earth.” And so it occurred.

Now it should be acknowledged that the critical text proposed here was earlier proposed by Berner.¹¹ However, his scenario for the development of the *Wortbericht* differs from the one laid out here. Berner begins, not with SP and G, but with M as the earliest recoverable text and argues for the use of *Wiederaufnahme* from the clauses יהי מארת ברקיע השמים “let there be luminaries in the congealment of the heavens” and והיו למאורת ברקיע השמים “and may they serve as luminaries in the congealment of the heavens” rather than from the phrase להאיר על הארץ “to illuminate the earth.” The result is an earlier inferable text which ultimately agrees with the critical text proposed here. Berner then explains the variant להאיר על הארץ “to illuminate the earth” in v. 14 in SP and G as a secondary harmonization to vv. 15 and 17 similar to Hendel. Therefore Berner’s scenario for the development of the *Wortbericht* is less elegant than the one proposed here since it does not plausibly explain the apparent awkwardness of text in SP and G. Accordingly, the scenario proposed in this paper is to be preferred.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion has not only yielded the earliest inferable text, but a more plausible scenario for how the *Wortbericht* of the fourth day developed. Left undiscussed is the *reason* for the expansion of the *Wortbericht* which requires a more comprehensive analysis of the entire narrative.¹² Such an analysis will hopefully be presented in the future. In the meantime, the examination here suggests that the presently constituted narrative of the Hexaemeron, whether as found in M, SP or G, is the end result of a not fully documented editorial process. All the extant textual witnesses were found to be secondary revisions which necessitated moving beyond textual criticism into the realm of literary criticism to recover the earliest inferable text. One should therefore expect to find other instances where the earliest inferable text is no longer extant in the available textual witnesses just outside the reach of textual criticism proper.

¹¹ Christoph Berner, “From the Primordial Light to Shabbat: How Creation Became Seven Days,” *TheTorah.com* (2023) Viewable online at <https://www.thetorah.com/article/from-the-primordial-light-to-shabbat-how-creation-became-seven-days>.

¹² Berner’s proposal benefits from its situation within a larger framework of the editorial process. Yet having found Berner’s scenario for the textual development of the *Wortbericht* of the fourth day to be less elegant, one must ask what other points in Berner’s understanding of the editorial process may require further refinement.

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